

Earlier this year, I was fortunate to read an article published in *Africa Geographic* by Dr Mike Kock on his expedition last year in northern Cameroon while he was on the trail of the elusive *D. b. longipes*. The first thing that struck me was that this is the type of adventure all young naturalists must dream of, just to have the opportunity to explore an area like northern Cameroon, and to have a mission while doing so.

Well, I was sold, and I am convinced that there are people out there in the world who will and can pay for such a unique experience. Perhaps I am an optimist, but there are more people who can afford to participate in such an expedition than there are donor organizations. So having convinced myself, I contacted appropriate people, and it wasn't long before I had joined forces with Dr Hubert Planton.

Project Black Ghost this far has been fortunate to attract interest from a variety of people dedicated to its cause. One such individual is Coenraad Vermaak, a well-known and respected hunting operator in South Africa. Through him we have been able to connect with two of the largest international hunting clubs, Dallas and Shikar Safari clubs, who are very supportive of the idea. Another key organization that will prove integral in the project is Conservation Force, a US-based foundation bridging conservation and hunt-

ing. Through its president, John Jackson III, we are able to operate the project through the foundation, which has various advantages, one being the tax benefit to the potential participants, making it even more attractive.

We have now passed the halfway mark in our preparations for 2003. We have a memorandum of agreement between Conservation Force, the Cameroon Wildlife Department, the African Rhino Specialist Group, the International Rhino Foundation, and the IUCN French Committee, and we have the support of various other organizations. We are now on an extensive marketing campaign through the various hunting clubs and publications and through various wildlife Web sites. We intend launching this expedition in April 2003 and are hoping to raise around USD 250,000 through Project Black Ghost (total needed is USD 500,000.) This amount, with additional funding, will allow us to have a good go at finding these animals.

The second phase of the project has always been a major issue, as merely finding the animals is only the beginning towards a long-term solution. We hope that through this initiative, and with the people who join us, Project Black Ghost will pave the way towards a long-term survival plan.

African rhino numbers continue to increase

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Status and trends in African rhino numbers

This short note summarizes the main points to emerge from AfRSG's compilation of continental rhino statistics (as of December 2001). The compilation was undertaken at AfRSG's last meeting, held at Malilangwe, Zimbabwe, in June 2002. As with previous continental statistics, speculative gues-timates are not included in the country totals. Nor are individual population totals presented here—for security reasons and to respect the wishes of some range states. Country totals are given by subspecies in table 1.

White rhino

Southern white rhino, *Ceratotherium simum simum*, numbers have continued to increase to an estimated 11,640 in 2001, up from 6784 in 1993, 7532 in 1995, 8441 in 1997 and 10,377 in 1999. Northern white rhinos remain limited to Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo but have fared better in the second civil war. Surveys estimate there were 30 northern white rhino (*C. s. cottoni*) in 2002.

The status of the two white rhinos that were seen alive in Mozambique and that were probably escapees from Kruger is unknown, and they are presumed dead. White rhino numbers in Zambia have remained stable.

Table 1. Numbers of white and black rhinos in Africa in 2001, by country and subspecies

Country	White rhinos				Black rhinos					
	<i>C. s. cottoni</i> (north- ern)	<i>C. s. simum</i> (south- ern)	Total	Trend	<i>D. b. bicornis</i> (south- western)	<i>D. b. longipes</i> (west- ern)	<i>D. b. michaeli</i> (east- ern)	<i>D. b. minor</i> (south- ern central)	Total	Trend
Botswana		39	39	up						
Cameroon						8				
Chad						temp?				
D R Congo	30		30	up?						
Kenya		170	170	up			430		430	up
Malawi								7	7	stable
Mozambique		extinct?	0	down				extinct?	0	
Namibia		170	170	up	893 ^a				893	up
Rwanda							extinct		0	down
South Africa		10,988	10,988	up	50		35	1,094	1,179	up
Swaziland ^b		50	50	up				10	10	up
Tanzania							33	16 ^a	49	up
Zambia		5	5	stable						
Zimbabwe		218	218	up				524	524	up
Total	30	11,640	11,670	up	943	8	498	1,651	3,100	up

Numbers were compiled by the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group at the 2002 AfRSG meeting held in Zimbabwe 1–6 June 2002. Table excludes speculative guestimates. Ivory Coast southern white rhinos are excluded as they are semi-captive and out of range. Countries listed with 0 may possibly have rhinos, but their presence needs confirmation.

^a Numbers of *D. b. bicornis* in Namibia and *D. b. minor* in Tanzania may well be higher, but this requires confirmation.

^b Exact Swaziland numbers were given to AfRSG but are being kept confidential for security reasons. The table shows approximations to true number.

However, in all other countries with wild white rhino populations, numbers have increased.

South Africa remains by far the most important range state with 94.2% of the wild white rhino population, amounting to almost 11,000 white rhinos; while Zimbabwe (218), Namibia (170) and Kenya (170) conserve most of the remainder. A total of 2853 (24.5%) of the continental total are now privately owned.

Black rhino

At the continental level, black rhino numbers stabilized at about 2400–2500 between 1992 and 1995, increasing up to 2700 by 1999. Encouragingly, the latest 2001 black rhino estimate of 3100 indicates numbers continue to creep upwards. The major range states are still South Africa (1179 black rhinos), Namibia (893), Zimbabwe (524) and Kenya (430). While the increase is encouraging, some rated populations in a number of range states have been

performing suboptimally and may be overstocked.

The **western** subspecies, *Diceros bicornis longipes*, remains the most critically endangered. The estimates used here were based on surveys by Dr Mike Kock in 2001, which indicate that some rhinos were likely to have survived as a very small scattered metapopulation in northern Cameroon.

Overall numbers of the **eastern** *D. b. michaeli* have shown a small increase with the majority (86.3%) being conserved in Kenya. However, Namibia remains the stronghold of the **south-western** black rhino, *D. b. bicornis*, conserving 94.7% of the estimated 943 animals in 2001. Sadly, since 1999, this subspecies has become extinct in Rwanda.

The most numerous subspecies, the **southern central** *D. b. minor*, occurs in five range states of which South Africa with 1094 (66.3%) and Zimbabwe with 524 (31.8%) are by far the most important. Overall numbers of this subspecies have increased from 1298 in 1995 to 1363 in 1997 to 1467 in 1999 and 1651 in 2001.

Some Zimbabwe populations in particular continue to show very rapid growth, although the snaring and disruption caused by the land invasions and resettlement in some conservancies are a cause for serious concern.

After a period of rapid metapopulation growth in the early to mid 1990s, growth rates in some AfRSG-rated *Key* and *Important* populations in a number of range states have declined. It is believed that conservative removals from some donor populations have resulted in overstocking and subsequently in density-dependent declines in performance. If the recommendations to emerge from the SADC Rhino Management Group (RMG) Biological Management Meeting (attended by representatives of all the 'Big 4' rhino range states) are adopted, this should, in time, lead to an improvement in metapopulation performance.

AfRSG-rated continentally *Key* and *Important* populations

Table 2 gives a breakdown by country and species of the 93 AfRSG-rated *Key* and *Important* populations in 2001. The number of rated populations has increased (up from 76 in 1999), and in 2001 these populations conserved 2720 (87.7%) and 9887 (84.7%) of Africa's black and white rhinos respectively.

Corresponding proportions of the subspecies conserved in AfRSG-rated populations in 2001 varied from 83.9% (eastern black) to 84.9% (southern white) to 88.2% (south central black) to 88.8% (south-western black) to 100% for the two rarest subspecies (northern white and western black).

The five white and five black populations rated *Key 1* conserved 7997 (68.5%) and 1373 (44.3%) of Africa's white and black rhinos respectively. The 11 *Key 2* black rhino populations conserved 773 (24.9%) rhinos, and the 9 *Key 2* white rhino populations conserved 606 (5.2%) rhinos. In 2001, the 30 AfRSG *Key*-rated populations conserved 2146 (69.2%) black rhinos and 8573 white rhinos (73.5%). The 19 *Important* black rhino populations conserved a further 574 (18.5%) rhinos with the 44 *Important* white rhino populations conserving 1314 (11.3%) rhinos. The remaining 51 unrated black and 269 unrated white rhino populations conserved 380 (12.3%) and 1783 (15.3%) rhinos respectively.

Rhinos under various management models

African rhino numbers in 2001 were broken down according to species, subspecies, and management or ownership models. White rhinos in the Kruger National Park area are listed as state owned, while

Table 2. Number of *Key* and *Important* African rhinoceros populations by country in 2001 (1999)

Country	Black rhinos			White rhinos			Rated populations Key & Imp.
	Key 1	Key 2	Imp.	Key 1	Key 2	Imp.	
Botswana						1 (0)	1 (0)
Cameroon ^a	1 (1)						1 (1)
DR Congo				1 (1)			1 (1)
Kenya		4 (2)	5 (7)		1 (1)	2 (2)	12 (12)
Namibia	2 (2)		2 (1)		1 (0)	2 (3)	7 (6)
South Africa ^b	2 (2)	3 (1)	7 (6)	4 (4)	6 (5)	34 (25)	56 (43)
Swaziland						2 (1)	2 (1)
Zimbabwe		4 (3)	5 (4)		1 (0)	3 (5)	13 (12)
Total	5 (5)	11 (6)	19 (18)	5 (5)	9 (6)	44 (36)	93 (76)

Numbers in parentheses give 1999 numbers for comparison.

^a In recognition of the rarity of this subspecies, the Cameroon metapopulation of western black rhinos has historically been rated as a *Key 1* 'metapopulation', although strictly speaking each discrete group of animals should be treated as a separate population.

^b Two *Important* South African black populations have 20+ animals but the animals are being temporarily held in separate, discrete areas within these parks. Strictly speaking, each discrete group should be treated as a different population, and then neither of these populations would be classified. However, the plan is to consolidate these discrete groups into a single population in each park.

those resident in the adjoining three private nature reserves are listed as privately owned.

While approximately three out of every four African rhinos are still conserved in state-run protected areas (73.9%), 20.1% are privately owned with a further 4.1% managed by the private sector on a custodianship basis for the state. Rhinos on communal land account for a further 1.1% with only 0.9% under other ownership or management models.

The bulk of privately managed black rhinos are under custodianship on behalf of the state (19.3% of all black rhinos). Only 3.4% of black rhinos are privately owned. This differs from white rhinos, where 24.5% are privately owned. Overall the number and proportion of all rhinos managed by the private sector in Africa has increased from 2912 (22.2%) in 1999 to 3585 (24.3%) in 2001.

More black rhinos than white rhinos occur on communal land (138 vs. 22), accounting for 4.5% of all black rhinos.

The state conservation sector

Just under three-quarters of both Africa's rhino species are conserved on state land in gazetted national parks, game reserves and nature reserves. These parks and reserves are run by formal state conservation bodies.

Numbers of populations by model

In 2001, of the 330 known white rhino populations in Africa, 260 (78.8%) were privately owned and included 4 *Key 2* and 27 *Important* white rhino populations. However, many of these privately owned white rhino populations are small, with an average size of only 11 rhinos, compared with an average of 174 in state-run protected areas. The 50 state populations conserved 74.5% of Africa's white rhinos in 2002.

Of the 86 black rhino populations in 2001, 45 occurred on state-protected areas with an average population size of 50 rhinos. Of those that are privately managed, 26 populations (about 30% of all populations) were managed by the private sector on a custodianship basis (average size = 23 rhinos). In 2001 there were 10 privately owned black rhino populations, averaging only 10.5 rhinos each.

In four of the white rhino range states (Botswana, Kenya, Namibia and Swaziland), more white rhinos occur on privately managed or owned land or com-

munal land than on land managed by the formal state conservation bodies. In Zimbabwe in 2001, approximately twice as many black rhinos were managed by the private sector on a custodianship basis (348) than were conserved in state-run protected areas (176). A further 251 black rhinos were managed under custodianship in Kenya, Namibia and Swaziland, with 105 being privately owned in South Africa.

Private ownership

By 2001, 2853 (24.5%) of Africa's southern white rhinos were privately owned, with most of these in South Africa.

In 2001, 4 of the 14 AfRSG-rated *Key* white rhino populations in the world were privately owned populations, and a further 17 of the 35 AfRSG-rated *Important* white rhino populations occurred on private land. One of the 5 *Key 1* populations was a national park linked to adjacent private game reserves.

Custodianship

In contrast to the pattern with white rhinos, there are many black rhinos on private land in Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe that are managed on a custodianship basis for the state (as opposed to being privately owned). In 1999, the 11 AfRSG-rated *Key* populations of black rhinos included two Zimbabwean conservancies and one Kenyan sanctuary, with a further five *Important* custodianship populations. From 1997 to 1999, numbers of black rhinos managed by the private sector on a custodianship basis increased from 394 to 483.

Communal land

Black rhino numbers have, in general, declined markedly over the last decade on much of the communal land where they used to occur. At present, 17.6% of the south-western black rhinos and 2.0% of the eastern black rhinos are conserved on communal land.

Overall, 5.2% of Africa's black rhinos occurred on communal land in 1999, compared with only 0.2% of Africa's white rhinos.

Municipal and county council reserve areas

In South Africa and Kenya, a limited number of reserves and conservation areas are run by local area or

municipal authorities. The Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya is run by the local Narok and Trans Mara county councils, and in Tanzania the Ngorongoro Area Authority manages Ngorongoro and the surrounding area. South Africa also has seven small, municipally owned and run parks that have a few white rhinos.

In 1999 such municipal and county council local-area authority parks held 39 white rhinos and 42 black rhinos, accounting for about 0.6% of Africa's rhinos. All such black rhinos are of the eastern subspecies; they make up 8.6% of this subspecies in the wild.

Table 3 gives a breakdown by management ownership model of the number of rated populations.

Table 3. Number of *Key* and *Important* African rhinoceros populations by management model in 2001

Management model	Black rhinos			White rhinos		Rated populations	
	Key 1	Key 2	Imp	Key 1	Key 2	Imp	Key & Imp
Communal	1					1	2
Other (Defence/Zoo NRs) ^a							0
Municipal & country council			1				1
Privately owned			1		4	27	32
Private custodianship		4	5				9
State ^b	4	7	12	4	5	15	47
State and private ^c				1			1
State-owned, privately run						1	1
Total	5	11	19	5	9	44	93

^a Defence/Zoo NRs refer to populations of rhino conserved on Defence Force conservation land or in nature reserves run by zoos.

^b See also table 2 notes a and b.

^c Kruger National Park and three adjoining private reserves form one large, contiguous conservation area of 21,413 km². While the majority of white rhinos occur in the national park area, a further 285 are on adjoining private land.

Progress in developing a Scene of the Crime training course

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Significant progress has been made in the project of developing a Scene of the Crime training course, which is being funded by the SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation. Rod Potter had completed the full series of lecture notes and the project leader had reviewed them by the end of September. The lecture notes are currently being converted into the course handbook by

- adding sections to each chapter outlining the skills the trainees should have by the end of the chapter
- including course exercises and adding space for

the trainees to write up the exercises and add examples from class

- outlining how participants will be assessed on each course chapter and specifying how many marks the exercises in each chapter will count towards the final course mark (some chapters count for more than others).

The course handbook is on schedule to be completed by the next SADC rhino programme consortium meeting on 29 October.

An updated list of the countries and organizations